

## Cross Party Group on Deaf Issues

4<sup>th</sup> March 2014

### **Attendees**

Ann Jones (Chair)  
Donna Cushing (Minute Secretary)  
Rachael Earp (Secretariat)

### **Representatives/Stakeholders**

Richard Williams  
Jacqui Bond  
Michelle Fowler-Powe  
Norman Moore  
Meryl Roberts  
Jayne Dulson  
Elin Wyn  
Barbara Rees  
Nigel Williams  
Ross Evans

### **Assembly Members**

Mark Isherwood

### **Communication support**

Rachel Smith (Interpreter)  
Claire Anderson (Interpreter)  
Grace Garnett (Lipspeaker)  
Hilary Maclean (palantypist)

#### 1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if this meeting room was preferable to the usual committee room as will try and organise for future meetings if members agreed. All members agreed. Additionally, the Chair will enquire with technical support regarding problems with the loop.

Apologies were received from Jim Edwards and Gill Hadfield.

Minutes of the last meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

## 2. Actions from the last meeting in Cardiff

Information regarding Actions from the last meeting was previously distributed. This is to be discussed on the agenda.

## 3. Hearing aid re-assessment – Responses from Health Boards

Richard Williams commented that the feedback was welcome and the group await responses from Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Hywel Dda, however, there were 3 issues that need to be addressed.

- Waiting times are too long – recent information received hints at it being upto a year in some cases.
- There is no structured process in place to call patients back it is left to the patients themselves to make an appointment to return within 3 years. This information isn't available for patients and there is only one Health Board in Wales that highlights this on their Website.
- Statistics for re-assessment do not seem to match up with the ever increasing older population projections. Figures received from the Health Boards seem to suggest it is the reverse. This issue needs to be addressed.

Norman Moore stated that Wales Council for Deaf People were currently working with Cwm Taff Health Board to address some of these issues. It is hoped to set up a system where patients can be recalled within 6 weeks of being fitted for a friendly informal chat and to address issues with individuals from health, social services and the voluntary sector. Patients can then be signposted to where they need the most help. The format of the scheme has not yet been finalised and if successful it will be adopted and moved into other areas.

Richard Williams further highlighted Quality Standards that are currently under review by the Health Boards and are in the process of public consultation. Richard stated that this would be an opportunity to ensure the standards are patient/language friendly and for them to be available on their website.

The Chair stated that she would contact both Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Hywel Dda for their responses and request all Health Boards ensure appropriate information is available for patients on their website.

## 4. Social Services and Wellbeing Bill update

The Chair informed those present, as a result of 177 amendments required to the Bill it has gone back to the report stage of the process. When the report is available members need to consider any additional changes required prior to any further processes. The Chair further stated that this could take a considerable amount of time before it is passed and implemented.

## 5. Accessible Information Standards Public Awareness campaign

Rachael Earp informed members the Accessible Standards was launched in December. The standards are to empower individuals when receiving primary or secondary NHS care. AOHL have produced small business information cards to distribute to the public and it will give information on how members of the public can access the information on the AOHL website.

Richard Williams informed members that every Health Board have Task and Finishing Groups and they have already started incorporating the standards.

Michelle Fowler further stated that the BDA have produced a document on best practice BSL Guidelines for health professionals and the launch of this will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> March at the Senedd.

Norman Moore expressed his concerns for hearing aid user that use a combination of lipreading and their hearing aids and the lack of good communication by health staff. They need to use more plain language and be articulate.

Additionally, Jayne Dulson stated that NDCS will be launching another resource later in the year 'My Life My Health' which is primarily aimed at GPs, at parents of deaf children and deaf children and young people themselves. It is currently available on the NDCS website and will shortly be available in Welsh.

Ross Evans enquired who would be monitoring the standards.

Richard Williams stated they are government standards and the Health Care Inspectorate and Community Councils will be monitoring them however, it is hoped that the general public will be the prime monitors of standards and ensuring that the Health Boards maintain them.

## 6. Close the Gap update

Elin Wyn notified members that NDCS had presented a petition to the Assembly last year on the Close the Gap campaign which highlights the attainment levels between deaf pupils and hearing pupils which can be as high as 25%. NDCS expressed concerns that the Education Workforce Bill to include SEN reform which was originally discussed back in 2007 and the White paper is due to be published in Spring this year may not be introduced until the next Assembly term.

Members further discussed assessment of children and the processes involved.

This issue was discussed at length and the Chair stated that she would contact the Minister to establish the situation on the SEN Bill and progress report on the Additional Needs Bill.

## 7. AM update

Mark Isherwood informed those present that he will be attending an Enabling Wales event on 11<sup>th</sup> March which will include individuals from Access to Work.

Furthermore, Mark Isherwood informed those present of a new initiative he had recently heard about called the deaf mark which law firms are now using. He would be interested if this is used more widely than just law firms, as this is something that could be used and highlighted to the public.

Additionally, responses have been circulated regarding health boards. Members still feel that more needs to be done and information needs to be easily accessible on their websites.

## 8. AOB

### Non-emergency 101

Michelle Fowler-Powe highlighted continued issues regarding 101. She had visited 4 different deaf clubs who have stated that they cannot access the service via text and have to through text direct or a family member if they wish to use the service. Additionally, they have been told they can use the "Our Bobby" system but this also has flaws as it can take upto a week to get a response via this service. Some of the deaf community have suggested 1011 as an alternate service.

Michelle Fowler-Powe also informed those present that currently there is an App which is being piloted at the moment but this is only suitable for hearing people and not deaf.

Michelle stated that she has set up a meeting with one of the police commissioners to discuss the needs of deaf and the 101 non emergency number and will keep members apprised of developments.

### Paediatric Audiology Waiting Times

Jayne Dulson stated that Paediatric quality standards audits is done annually. By October of last year it appears that figures were well outside the standards required. However, she is pleased to report that a lot of work has been done across the board and it seems that this has now come down considerably.

Members discussed this issue at length.

### Lip-reading for people with acquired hearing disability

Meryl Roberts stated that there are 11 students waiting to complete the course this year. Classes are in the process of being established – Merthyr needs only one more person to sign up and the class will start. Have had commitment from Bridgend for 8 week taster class and a number of other authorities are coming on board, many of which, are running taster sessions with the hope that these will continue.

Meryl Roberts stated the biggest problem at the moment is cost of attending the course which could be anything from £30 - £60 for an 8/10 week course. Many elderly pensions cannot afford this expense from their pensions.

Members discussed this issue and concluded contact is made with Coleg I Cymru to establish if there is funding available.

### Live subtitling on TV

Norman Moore stated that live subtitling was still unacceptable. Its full of missing information and mistakes. However, Norman Moore informed members that he was contacted yesterday by a company in England that also produces live subtitling in Wales, to review them.

Members discussed this issue at length and concluded that the group contact companies and highlight issues around subtitling.

### Cross Party groups terms of reference

The Chair informed members that the group are compliant with the rules and the AGM will be scheduled for 10 minutes prior to the next meeting of the APGDI in May.

### 9. Close and date of next meeting

The next meeting of the APGDI in Cardiff will be held in May – date to be confirmed.